

News From Somewhere

the *Observer* grew bulky with publishers' advertisements, which loudly announced books for all tastes, with reviewers' opinions appended—what Mr. Howard Spring could not lay down, and had chosen for his Book of the Month; what had kept Mr. Ralph Strauss awake into the small hours of the mornings, and Mr. Swinnerton found delectable. Mr. Wells impatiently clamoured for an encyclopaedia,²³ larger and more comprehensive than any hitherto published, a tome containing all knowledge, and which would make available the data necessary for a World Brain to plan a World State; and Maxim Gorki, shortly before his death, announced his intention of writing a book in which a day in the life of the world would be exhaustively described, a general invitation being issued to send him suitable material relating to the day chosen.

Book Clubs were founded, Left, Right and Centre, National and International, Religious and Irreligious, which provided their members with congenial literature at reduced prices, and which were described by a well-known bookseller as *the greatest innovation in the history of book-selling which this decade can show'. The most successful of these was unquestionably the Left Book Club, whose originator was Mr. Victor Gollancz, and which soon had a membership of over 50,000. Professor Laski, Mr. John Strachey and Mr. Gollancz chose the books; local branches were founded to discuss them and enrol new members, and meetings were held, at the more important of which one or other of the Triumvirate appeared in person. To hear Mr. Gollancz explaining to a responsive audience what

²³ See *World Brain* and. *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*.